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ABSTRACT

Various approaches to the management of large classes identified in the literature are categorized, with information drawn especially from earlier findings of the Lancaster-Leeds Language Learning in Large Classes Research Project. The discussion makes use of sources appearing during the last 150 years, but emphasizes the period since 1960. Three broad categories are identified: (1) two plenary approaches ("There is no alternative!" and "Let the people sing!"); (2) interactive approaches; and (3) compromise approaches. The plenary approaches are both teacher centered and teacher controlled, and the lesson is primarily a lecture but may include audience involvement. Teachers who use them likely see no available alternative. In the interactive approach, actually a continuum of approaches, the teacher deliberately grants opportunities to learners to interact. Compromise approaches, seen primarily in postsecondary institutions, may include inspirational lecturing, written-oral interaction, revolving roles, the "SHOP" experiment, and "repackaging" the combination or required class sizes. Examples of each approach are cited from around the world. Contains 19 references. (LB)

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LANGUAGE LEARNING IN LARGE CLASSES

RESEARCH PROJECT

APPROACHES TO THE MANAGEMENT OF LARGE CLASSES

HYWEL COLEMAN

PROJECT REPORT NO. 11

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1 Introduction (1)

This paper is essentially an attempt to categorise the various approaches to the management of large classes which can be found in the literature. It draws on - but by no means exhausts - the extensive bibliography on large classes which has been issued by the Lancaster-Leeds Language Learning in Large Classes Research Project (Project Report No. 1, 1989). The discussion makes use of sources which have appeared over the last century and a half, but concentrates on a period covering the last thirty years or so. Although the majority of items considered here have been written by people working in the field of English Language Teaching, the discussion also makes use of some sources which do not deal primarily with the learning and teaching of ***language***.

It appears that the approaches which we can find in the literature fall into three broad categories. The first of these categories has to be subdivided into two; the second is actually a fairly extended continuum; and the third is something of a ragbag of miscellaneous reports of attempts to come to terms with large classes. It will be clear, therefore, that I see this categorisation as a preliminary proposal, an initial attempt to sort the data, rather than as a cast-iron classification.

The provisional nature of this exercise is reflected in the titles or labels which I have given to the different categories.

Some of these labels are descriptive, with a reasonable degree of accuracy; others, however, are more light-hearted and are merely waiting to be replaced by more appropriate labels at some time in the future.

The classification which I am proposing is as follows :

A Plenary approaches
  A.1 There is no alternative!
  A.2 Let the people sing!

B Interactive approaches

C Compromise approaches

Each of these categories and subcategories will be discussed and illustrated in the remainder of this paper.

2 Plenary Approaches

Plenary approaches to the management of language learning in large classes are teacher-centred and teacher-controlled. The lesson is primarily a lecture ('There is no alternative!'), or, as we shall see, there may be some audience involvement in the form of choral work ('Let the people sing!'). When these approaches are discussed in the literature, they are normally presented, or justified, in one of two ways, either as being unavoidable or as actually being desirable because of the advantages which they bring with them.

2.1 There is no alternative!

This type of plenary approach argues basically that a lecture method is the only way of handling large classes. The proponents of the approach may be enthusiastic about their technique; more commonly, however, they tend to present it as inevitable, however undesirable it may actually be.

The ***inevitability*** of a non-interactive approach in large classes underlies the following quotation from a letter by Donald Byrd (1988:2-3) in a recent issue of the ***TESOL Newsletter***. The letter was a reaction to a presentation by Betty Taska at the 1988 TESOL Convention in Chicago :

> Just how international is TESOL? ... [One] consideration that confounds internationalizing TESOL is the hegemony of ESL, rather than EFL, materials, a matter poignantly brought to my attention by Betty Taska in a presentation in Chicago. She indicted most English language materials used abroad for being too ESL-oriented, ... and for championing interactive classroom practice, a very difficult procedure in typically large EFL classes.

It is this assumption that 'interactive classroom practice' is impossible in a large class which typifies the plenary approaches.

The next item is taken from an article which is intended to give advice to teachers of large classes (Brooks 1987:42). Although the author is not a language teacher, the procedure which he is proposing typifies the plenary approach which is used by many language teachers when faced with large classes :

> In a large class, lack of contact between an instructor and students can lead to inattentiveness. ... An instructor must be sensitive to the level of attentiveness within the class. For example, you are in a technical section of a lecture. Your voice drones on as you wade through the material. Suddenly you hear yourself being boring. You sense a remoteness between yourself and the class. Solution? At the very least, alter the tone of your voice, ask a question, or tell a joke. Learn to listen to your own instincts. Recognize when your hold on their attention is weakening, and react immediately.

Again, we can see that beneath this advice there lies the assumption that lecturing is what the teacher should be doing. If the teacher wishes to improve his or her performance, then the answer is available not in abandoning the lecture format but in tinkering with it, by telling a joke or by altering the tone of one's voice.

Some proponents of the plenary lecture approach do, however, seem to take some pleasure in their task, as Aronson (1987:35) shows :

> There can be great satisfaction in teaching large classes. For twenty years I have taught classes with enrollments of up to seven hundred students and I have never tired of the experience. ... Large classes are very efficient and cost effective. ... The best and perhaps only way to keep your students interested in the subject is to deliver stimulating and exciting lectures. ... The cordless microphone allows me to wander anywhere I wish while lecturing. I lecture from the front of the class, which is normal, or from the back. I can lecture from any seat in the hall or from outside the hall. Such moving around tends to keep the students awake.

Aronson, like Brooks, is not a language teacher, and, like Brooks, his article appears in a collection (edited by Weimer 1987) which aims to provide advice for teachers of large classes.

What is particularly interesting about Aronson's contribution is that, even though he clearly enjoys his peripatetic role, he still believes that 'the best and perhaps ***only way*** [my emphasis] to keep your students interested in the subject is to deliver ... lectures'.

2.2 Let the people sing!

There is an alternative to the lecture approach, in which, as we have seen, learners are almost totally silent. In the 'Let the people sing!' alternative the most prominent feature is the use of choral drilling. There are some indications that this approach has been in use for a considerable time. For example, we know of a book by Alexander Bell (father of the phonetician Alexander Melville Bell and grandfather of the inventor of the telephone Alexander Graham Bell) with the title ***Principles of Simultaneous Reading Adapted for Classes of Five Hundred or One Thousand Pupils***. This was published in London in 1842. Unfortunately, we have so far been unable to get access to a copy of this work, but it would appear that what Bell was proposing was an approach to the teaching of elocution which involved simultaneous reading aloud by large numbers of learners.

Another intriguing hint can be found in Gauntlett (1961:111), who refers to the work of 'Dr Richards' - presumably I.A. Richards - in this way :

> For intensive work, classes of ten or so are desirable, but for purely mechanical work hundreds, according to Dr Richards, may learn at one time.

Again, we have not yet been able to track down a more detailed description of this mechanical chanting for hundreds of learners at a time.

A rather more recent and a more complete discussion of a choral approach used in large classes can be found in Ann Barker's article describing her TESOL 1976 workshop (1976:11-13), which in turn is based on experience in Mexican schools :

> The conditions under which I teach mean that I am almost constantly in class during my waking hours and before groups as large as 55 students. There is no time for pre-class preparation during this period. My solution is ... having an always ready repertory of oral drills on English structures. ... Students repeat the questions and answers after the teacher. ... They soon become accustomed to this technique, which I call 'Instant English' because of the numerous sentences practised with rapidity by the students in a short time. It is one of the most valuable and popular techniques that I have developed. ... They particularly like the rapid repetition of the sentences and of 'etcetera' in boisterous chorus when this becomes tiresome.

It is always encouraging to come across people who actually *enjoy* working with large classes. Nevertheless, one cannot help wondering how much semantic value the boisterous chants, produced by 55 people at a time, still have to the learners who have to utter them.

It is reasonable to assume that the choral approach has been and still is very widespread. An indication of the frequency with which the approach is used can be found in a passage in

Timothy Mo's novel ***Sour Sweet*** (1983:237).[2] Lily, a Hong Kong Chinese immigrant living in London in the 1970s, is dissatisfied with the type of education which her son, Man Kee, is getting in the state primary school which he goes to. She therefore arranges for him to attend supplementary Chinese classes on Saturday mornings :

> She was lucky to be able to get him accepted by the school, which was a large upstairs room and a smaller one. The premises were not prepossessing but who cared when the core of the curriculum, the great heritage of Chinese language and culture, was such a priceless acquisition. She took Son into the rooms, in which there must have been seventy or eighty little Chinese children ... The size of the class reassured her : they meant business. None of your frivolous English-style groups of twenty or thirty. This was organised on the same traditional principles as a boxing class, with the children learning by example and repetition. ... A reassuring drone of young voices chanting, learning by rote, came from the other room as if from some forgotten chamber of Lily's own remembrance.

2.3 Summary

There is nothing very surprising about either the 'There is no alternative!' or the 'Let the people sing!' types of plenary approach. They have probably been in use for a long time; indeed, they are probably both still in regular use by many teachers in many parts of the world. What is significant is that the teachers who use them apparently do so because they see no available alternative.

It is also worth remarking that, despite the presumed frequency with which these two approaches are actually used in classrooms, it has been surprisingly difficult to track down references to them and detailed descriptions of them. As we saw in Section 2.1 above, the two main sources for descriptions of the lecture approach are not language teaching situations at all. Meanwhile, for our discussion of the choral approach we have had to depend largely on secondary and literary sources.

It has been suggested that there are relatively few published discussions of what are clearly very popular approaches because the teachers who use them are in some way embarrassed to be seen acknowledging in public that this is what they do. I do not think that this is the explanation, however. It is much more likely to be the case that lecture and choral approaches are not discussed simply because they are indeed so common. Ubiquity, combined with the assumption that in any case there are no alternatives, renders any topic unworthy of discussion.

3 Interactive Approaches

I have given the label 'Interactive' to the second major approach to the management of large classes. Strictly speaking, however, this is not a single approach. It is, rather, a continuum - and a very 'extended' continuum at that.

At one end of the continuum we find teaching which is still largely teacher-centred and teacher-dominated but which nevertheless deliberately grants occasional opportunities to learners to interact, either with each other or with the teacher. The essential difference between the plenary approaches which we considered in Section 2 and the more formal end of the interactive continuum is that the latter does at least concede the possibility of some variety, however sparingly it may be recommended.

At the other end of the continuum, we find highly interactive teaching in which the central and public role of the teacher has almost disappeared.

Incidentally, it is noticeable that, whereas we had some difficulty tracking down sources to substantiate the plenary classification and its sub-divisions, there is no shortage of material available to justify an 'interactive' category. The material which follows has been selected from a quite extensive corpus.

Hubbard et al. (1983:303-305) exemplify a cautious approach to introducing interactive activities in large classes :

> ... classes of over 45 learners ... demand special teaching techniques and ... present the teacher with numerous problems. ... It is tempting to dismiss pair-work as impracticable with such a large class, but remember that the additional noise is much more obvious to the teacher than to the pairs themselves; they will not be aware of any great increase in noise and will be able to continue with their exchanges in the usual way.

> However, there are other considerations (such as the class next door perhaps) and it might be useful then to restrict pair-work to half the class at any one time.

The use of pair work is being encouraged, it appears, but then only to the extent that half the class should use it at any one time. As the authors define a large class as being one with 'over 45 learners', in effect they are suggesting a form of classroom management in which, from time to time, there may be as few as 12 pairs involved in some sort of pair work, alongside two dozen students who are working individually.

Another cautiously interactive approach is recommended by Littlejohn (1987:38) :

> In many parts of the world, teachers have to cope with very large classes - often over 40 pupils and sometimes as many as 60 or 70 pupils. This makes it very difficult for these teachers to make use of recent ideas about a 'communicative' or 'learner-centred' approach to language teaching. ... Normally, it is easiest to do the initial parts of the lesson with the class as a whole. ... Beyond these points, however, the pupils can work in groups.

According to Littlejohn, then, group work should be allotted to certain parts of the lesson only. He goes on to make a series of suggestions for organising groups according to learners' interests, needs, mother tongue and ability.

The next example comes from a non-ELT source. Frederick (1987:46) works in tertiary education in the United States but is concerned with teaching very large classes. His purpose is to show that interaction - both teacher-learner and learner-learner

- can be introduced even in large classes. His suggestions range from the very modest to the highly interactive :

> [There are] several specific, practical ways of promoting active, participatory learning within the large lecture class format. Each of these approaches assumes a class size of at least one hundred students, sitting in conventionally tiered, dimly-lit lecture halls, with chairs in rows bolted to the floor facing a professor up (or down) front behind a lectern. ... The active learning suggestions ... are grouped into five sections : interactive lectures [= brainstorming]; questioning; using small groups in large classes; critical thinking and problem-solving exercises; and large-class debates, simulations, and role playing.

Frederick recommends that teachers of large classes who wish to introduce 'active participatory learning' should do so gradually. This can be done by moving, step by step, along the continuum from encouraging students to interrupt lectures with questions, at one pole, to full-scale simulations and role-playing, at the other pole.

At the most interactive end of our own continuum we can find experiments such as the ***Risking Fun*** project in an Indonesian university. This was an attempt to replace a conventional teacher-centred plenary approach (the 'teaching spectacle') with a highly interactive 'learning festival'. The background to this experiment is described by Coleman (1987a:124) in the following way :

> ***Risking Fun*** did not become task-based as the result of a deliberate commitment to the strong interpretation of the communicative approach. Rather, a task-based strategy was adopted ***in response to*** the constraints with which the situation presented us, particularly the problems of very large classes and extremely inhibiting conventions of classroom behaviour. This directly contradicts the objection concerning large classes ...

which is often raised against the strong version of the communicative approach.

Elsewhere (1987b:98), Coleman lists the characteristics of the approach :

> Classes were large : 55 was the average class size, but classes with up to 110 members were not uncommon. ... [In such circumstances] it becomes necessary to put the participants - both teachers and students - into situations which will no longer be perceived as 'lessons', so that all who are involved can avoid falling back into the roles which are inextricably associated with the lesson format. A learning festival, therefore, will be distinguished from a teaching spectacle in at least three ways :
>
> 1 All participants will be equally active for the duration of the event.
> 2 The activity in which participants are involved will necessarily be interactive in nature.
> 3 The distinction between 'teacher' and 'student' will be minimized (at least for the duration of the event).

This highly interactive experiment is evaluated very positively (Coleman 1987a:144) :

> ... In general, we have found that this interactive task-based approach works successfully, even with the biggest of classes. The conventions of classroom interaction have been discarded, as we intended, yet anarchy has not resulted. For the most part, learners have been able to adopt completely new modes of classroom behaviour.

It may be worth observing that a rather similar attempt to introduce a highly interactive approach in very large classes in Egyptian tertiary level classrooms has recently been described in an unpublished paper by Holliday et al. (1989).

This is all heady stuff, and is a long way from the tentative proposals for occasional and partial use of pair work which we found at the other end of the interactive spectrum. However, before we get too carried away with the radical nature of these suggestions, we need to be reminded that nearly thirty years ago a highly decentralised and essentially interactive approach was already being recommended for large classes. Billows (1961:72) made this suggestion :

> However carefully and economically the teacher apportions his time, he cannot give every pupil in a large class much personal attention. To overcome this difficulty he divides the class into groups for further practice of what he has taught ... As language pupils gain in experience and skill in the use of the language, more and more of the necessary practice in its use will take place in groups and pairs, either under the indirect supervision of the teacher, or altogether beyond his reach.

Like Frederick (1987), Billows recommends a gradual movement towards greater interaction in the large class. His suggested movement is from supervised interaction (in this case, in the form of pair work) to a situation where learners practise the target language 'altogether beyond the reach' of the teacher. Billows is arguing, then, that a considerable share of the responsibility for learning has to be handed over from teachers to learners. Large classes actually make this 'delegation' of responsibility ***more*** necessary than is the case in smaller classes It is likely that, if Billows' recommendations were to be implemented, delegation of responsibility would have to take

place not only in the organisation of learning activities but also in evaluation.

4 Compromise Approaches

4.1 Introduction

We come now to the third major group of approaches to the management of large classes. However, as has already been suggested, these do not represent a coherent approach so much as an amalgam of innovative attempts which happen to have some features in common. We know of only five such projects, although almost certainly there are (or have been) others of which we are still unaware.

The characteristics which are shared by most, if not all, of these approaches include the following :

- they are in tertiary institutions
- they are in situations where, in absolute terms, very large numbers indeed are involved
- to some extent, the plenary lecture format is retained (thus the label 'compromise approach')
- although the lecture format is maintained, to some extent, the function of the lecture is a novel one
- to some extent, language learning is assumed to take place outside the context of the language lesson
- the approaches develop 'spontaneously', in reaction to severe local conditions and apparently in ignorance of other similar approaches

- the experiments tend to be successful, but their success sometimes has unforeseen consequences.

These approaches have been tried out in South Africa, Thailand, Spain, Hong Kong and the U.S.A. The available information about some of them is limited; in other cases, we have a much clearer idea of what happens. I will discuss them in order of increasing available detail.

4.2 Inspirational lecturing

The first experiment, in South Africa, took place at Fort Hare University a few years ago. Faced with language classes of 350, Sarah Murray adopted a system in which lectures continued to take place but were no longer seen as being the means by which language skills were developed. Instead, the plenary lecture became an occasion in which learners were 'inspired' and 'motivated' and in which their motivation to learn was guided and maintained. Outside the lecture, self-access opportunities were provided, together with a 'consultancy service'. It was expected that, having been fired with enthusiasm in the lectures, the learners would go away and do their own learning. Unfortunately, I am not aware of any published description of this experiment. However, it is known (a) that the experiment was successful in achieving its pedagogical aims, (b) that it no longer functions, and (c) that the fact that it no longer functions may be related

to the fact that it was so successful (Dick Allwright, personal communication).

4.3 Written-oral interaction

The second response to large classes which falls into this category comes from Ramkhamhaeng University in Bangkok, Thailand. A very brief description of the situation appeared in ***TESOL Newsletter*** in 1986 (Itzen 1986:27) :

> An open university is ***open to all***. ... Ramkhamhaeng University may well be one of the largest open universities in the world with its current enrollment of approximately 700,000 students. This term, 60,000 are enrolled for one first year English course! ... At Ramkhamhaeng, class attendance can be as high as 5,000 students with most of them watching on closed-circuit T.V. ... What does the teacher do in this situation? A variety of teaching approaches are used, but the more traditional ones are most common. Most instructors stick to lecturing [but] encourage their students to submit written questions and then respond to them in class, thus keeping in touch to a limited degree with students' needs.

The Ramkhamhaeng teachers continue to use plenary lectures as their primary teaching mode. What is interesting, however, is that students are encouraged to undertake an activity - however modest it may be - outside the lecture theatre. The learners submit written questions to their lecturer, who presumably selects and sorts the questions and then responds to them in the next lecture session.

4.4 Revolving roles

In a recent and unpublished paper (Burgess 1989), Sally Burgess has described an ongoing attempt to cope with rapidly increasing numbers of students taking a range of English language courses at the University of La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain. At one point she was required to teach two classes, of 55 and 115 students respectively. Her colleagues faced similarly large classes. Her response to this situation was to break down these two large classes into much smaller groups of about 20. This meant that learners met the teacher less frequently in formal classroom sessions, but it also necessitated an increased teaching load for the teacher.

Associated with the formation of smaller groups meeting less often was the practice of 'revolving roles'. Within each group of twenty learners, one sub-group was given the responsibility for selecting reading materials, another had responsibilty for presenting materials to the rest of the class, some individuals acted as observers, and so on. From time to time, these roles were revolved. Inevitably, this involvement of students in the planning and evaluation of classes meant that students did a lot of useful work outside the classroom itself.

A particularly interesting feature of the experiment has been that learners themselves have expressed a need to know what other groups are doing. So far, this need has been satisfied

through a series of constantly updated teacher-prepared poster displays of student work. However, it is likely that fortnightly plenary sessions for all students will be instituted in the near future. The function of these plenary sessions will be to review progress and to provide learners in all groups with a sense that their particular group is part of a wider community and is participating in a wider venture.

4.5 The 'SHOP' experiment

The fourth experiment which I have placed in the 'Compromise' category is a fairly recent one which has been carried out at Hong Kong Polytechnic. Information about it is available only in an unpublished set of notes (Long 1987). The experiment, given the title 'SHOP, a packaged writing course', was set up by Chris Long in 1985. Working in the Engineering Department of the Polytechnic, he found himself in a situation where 600 students needed English but only five tutors were available. Furthermore, only one hour a week over a twelve week period was allocated for English.

It was decided to allot approximately 120 students to each tutor, and then subdivide these 120 into forty groups of three students each. The twelve-week period was also subdivided into three four-week phases. Each group of three students elected its own group leader, but the group leader changed after each four-

week phase. In this way, each person had an opportunity to become a group leader.

Each tutor held a plenary session for all 120 students under his or her supervision just once a phase, i.e. once every four weeks. These plenary sessions were used for making announcements, for stock-taking, for showing films, and generally for fostering a feeling that the learners were part of a communal effort. In addition to the once-a-phase plenary meetings, a tutor's forty group leaders met him or her once a week for precise guidance on the next stage of work, for feedback on written work, and so on.

The small groups, of three learners each, actually studied independently, according to guidance provided by the tutor via the group leader. Group written assignments were submitted regularly, again via the group leader.

This is a very interesting attempt to achieve a compromise between a conventional mode of organising learning activities (the plenary lecture) and the introduction of a radical innovation (self-study cells). The lecture itself is no longer used for teaching as such, and the language learning takes place outside the lecture theatre. An equally interesting aspect of this experiment is one of its unexpected outcomes. As Long himself says (1987:3) :

> SHOP was an expedient - a stop-gap that worked well enough to be repeated and it has now become somewhat of

> a fixture - we have become victims, in a sense, of its non-failure!

Precisely because the SHOP experiment was a successful way of coping with a very difficult 'large numbers' situation, the institution in which the experiment took place no longer sees any argument for increasing the number of English teaching staff, and so what was originally a stop-gap measure has become routine.

4.6 Repackaging

The last in the series of 'Compromise' approaches is John Bolton's experiment at Montgomery College, Maryland (Bolton 1988). Bolton was required to teach a succession of ESL classes, each with 25 learners, for fifteen hours a week. He found 25 learners in a class to be too large to allow him to have the sort of individual contact which he wanted with his learners, and he observed that, unwillingly, he was drifting into a lecture mode.

Bolton therefore decided to 'repackage' his timetable, so that several of the classes were combined to form very large groups of 75 learners and with plenary lectures taking place for just five hours a week. This released a lot of time which could be spent working with individuals and small groups on specific problems and learning tasks. Bolton describes his experiment (1988:4-8) in this way :

> One can 'repackage' the combination of required class sizes over several sections and duty hours a week to more manageable proportions without compromising

> students' performance. Larger may be better. One large class may serve the students and their teacher at least as well as several smaller ones - perhaps better. Putting it in a slightly different way, if there is one large class three times a week, I can use the time generated by this aggregated section to students' advantage. ... In my case, 'repackaging' resulted in a 'megasection' (three sections in one) of a grammar/composition course. Because of additional time which the creation of the megasection generates, I was able to arrange supplemental structured meetings and tutorials with students on a small group and individual basis. ... Time in class, reduced by the megasection format, is allocated to additional office hours for tutorials and group conferences.

In his final comments on the description of his 'Compromise' approach, Bolton points out that the experiment has been a successful one and expresses his apprehension that the institutional administrators - having observed the success - may expect him to take on an even greater teaching load. This ironical outcome is precisely the same as that which Chris Long experienced in Hong Kong.

5 Conclusions

This survey of available descriptions in the literature of attempts to manage large classes has suggested that there are three broad approaches to the problem.

The first, traditional, approach treats large classes simply as plenary lectures, although in some cases there may be an attempt to involve the 'audience' through choral chanting.

Although some of the practitioners who recommend this approach seem to enjoy their teaching there is also a strong undercurrent that suggests that large classes are difficult and unpleasant and that the lecture is an unavoidable necessity. Even though we can assume that variations on this approach are very widely practised, it is surprisingly difficult to find descriptions of it in the literature.

The second approach is a range of attempts - from the modest to the uncompromising - to introduce interaction in the large class. It appears that most of these experiments are influenced by recent thinking concerning the way in which a second language is acquired, even though these ideas may have developed out of situations where classes are relatively small. The 'interactive' approaches then attempt to introduce these findings into situations where very large numbers are involved.

The third and final group of approaches retains aspects of both the first two. The plenary format is maintained to some extent, although it is no longer used for its traditional purpose, and it may account for only a relatively small amount of a learner's 'learning time'. Other formats are also introduced : small self-study groups, individual counselling, tutorials, and small classes of up to 20 students. In each case, a lot of the learning is expected to take place ***outside*** the context where learner meets teacher, and certainly outside the plenary lecture.

As time goes on and as we learn of more experiments in large class management, it may be that the classification which has been suggested here will come to seem inappropriate. For the time being, however, I would like to conclude with three general observations concerning the approaches which have been surveyed.

Firstly, it appears that the most positive approaches - in both the interactive and the compromise categories - see large classes as a reason *for* employing interaction or other innovative techniques. Large classes, in other words, need not be a reason or an excuse for avoiding innovation and experiment.

Secondly, both the interactive and the compromise approaches indicate that large classes require that more responsibility be given to learners - for all aspects of the learning procedure - than is conventionally the case. What makes the plenary approaches distinctly different from the other two groups of approaches is that the former do not allow the learners responsibility for anything.

Thirdly, however interesting the highly interactive approaches to the management of large classes may be, it is beginning to look as though the most exciting possibility is the one which is being exploited by the compromise approaches. That is to say, the classroom is seen not as the place where learning happens but, instead, as a place where administration is dealt

with, where learners are advised and given feedback, and where learners are inspired to go out and do their own learning.

Notes

1 There have been two earlier versions of this Report. One was presented as a paper in the Colloquium 'Language Learning in Large Classes : Research Update' which was held during the 1989 TESOL Convention in San Antonio. The second was presented as a paper in the Panel Discussion 'Language Learning in Large Classes' which was held during the 1989 IATEFL Conference at the University of Warwick. Assistance from the British Council and from the University of Leeds made it possible for me to present the paper in San Antonio (and to jointly convene the Colloquium). Assistance from the Overseas Education Unit of the School of Education at Leeds made it possible for me to present the paper in Warwick (and to co-chair the Panel Discussion).

2 This passage was brought to the attention of the Lancaster-Leeds Language Learning in Large Classes Research Project by Virgina LoCastro.

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